

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the previous amendments and the following remarks.

Without conceding the propriety of the drawing objection, the claims are amended to address the issue with respect to the recited closable ballast tanks. The drawings objections section also requires that "means for providing closability" and "means for ballasting" be shown or canceled from the claims. However, even assuming for the sake of discussion that those features are not already shown, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims do not recite "means for providing closability" or "means for ballasting". Withdrawal of the objections to the drawings is therefore respectfully requested.

The claims are amended to address the issues raised in paragraphs "3" and "4" of the Official Action. Withdrawal of the objections to the claims is therefore respectfully requested.

Before turning to the rejections, a brief discussion of aspects of an apparatus and method for reducing motion of a floating vessel according to disclosed embodiments is provided. As discussed on page 13 and illustrated in Fig. 1-3 of the application, a vessel 2 includes a deck 12 and tubes 13a, 14b, 14c and 14d suspended from the vessel 2. Each tube 14 is suspended from the vessel by two chains 16. The chains 16 from opposite tubes 14a, 14c and 14b, 14d are linked close to the center of the deck 12. Saddles 18 which increase the width of the vessel 2 support the chains 16 and transfer loads from the chains 16 to the vessel 2.

Claim 1 is rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,237,947, hereinafter Manning.

Manning discloses a variable draft hull including a pair of pods 14 supported on variable position arms 15. The Official Action appears to take the position that each of Manning's position arms 15 constitute suspending means of a stabilizer assembly, and that structure pivotally supporting the position arms 15 constitutes saddles. However, even accepting these interpretations for discussion purposes, amended Claim 1 is clearly distinguishable.

Specifically, the tops of the position arms 15 are connected to the hull, not to each other. Accordingly, Manning does not disclose a vessel including a top of a suspending means of a first stabilizer assembly directly connected to a top of a suspending means of a second stabilizer assembly, in combination with the other elements recited in amended Claim 1.

Claim 1 is therefore allowable over Manning, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 based on the disclosure in Manning is respectfully requested.

Claim 28 is also rejected as being anticipated by Manning.

Amended Claim 28 is allowable over Manning for reasons consistent with the above discussion of Claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 28 based on the disclosure in Manning is therefore also respectfully requested.

Claim 55 is also rejected as being anticipated by Manning.

Amended Claim 55 is allowable over Manning for reasons consistent with the above discussion of Claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 55 based on the disclosure in Manning is therefore also respectfully requested.

Claim 58 is also rejected as being anticipated by Manning.

Manning's pods 14 are not arranged to apply via their positioning arms 15 a downwardly directed force on a side of the hull when the side of the hull moves

upwards. Indeed, the pods 14 provide positive buoyancy rather than negative buoyancy. Moreover, Manning does not disclose structure pivotally supporting the position arms 15 which increases the width of the hull. Accordingly, Manning does not disclose a vessel including saddles which increase the width of the vessel, stabilizer assemblies arranged to apply via their suspending means a downwardly directed force on a side of the vessel from which it is suspended when the side of the vessel moves upwards, the stabilizer assemblies being suspended from substantially opposite sides of the vessel in association with the saddles, wherein the saddles are arranged to transfer loads from the elongate flexible suspending means to the vessel, in combination with the other elements recited in amended Claim 58.

Claim 58 is therefore allowable over Manning, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 58 based on the disclosure in Manning is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 is also rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,073,573, hereinafter Gruber.

Gruber discloses a floating multi-unit dwelling including ballasts 22 supported on fasteners 24. The Official Action appears to take the position that each of Gruber's fasteners 24 constitute suspending means of a stabilizer assembly, and that structure supporting the fasteners 24 constitutes saddles. However, even accepting these interpretations for discussion purposes, amended Claim 1 is clearly distinguishable.

Specifically, the tops of the fasteners 24 are connected to the dwelling, not to each other. Accordingly, Gruber does not disclose a vessel including a top of a suspending means of a first stabilizer assembly directly connected to a top of a

suspending means of a second stabilizer assembly, in combination with the other elements recited in amended Claim 1.

Claim 1 is therefore allowable over Gruber, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 based on the disclosure in Gruber is respectfully requested.

Claim 28 is also rejected as being anticipated by Gruber.

Amended Claim 28 is allowable over Gruber for reasons consistent with the above discussion of Claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 28 based on the disclosure in Gruber is therefore also respectfully requested.

Claim 55 is also rejected as being anticipated by Gruber.

Amended Claim 55 is allowable over Gruber for reasons consistent with the above discussion of Claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 55 based on the disclosure in Gruber is therefore also respectfully requested.

Claim 58 is also rejected as being anticipated by Gruber.

Gruber does not disclose structure supporting the fasteners 24 which increase the width of the dwelling. Indeed, Gruber's fasteners 24 are suspended from points on the dwelling that are narrower than the width of the dwelling. Accordingly, Gruber does not disclose a vessel including saddles which increase the width of the vessel, stabilizer assemblies arranged to apply via their suspending means a downwardly directed force on a side of the vessel from which it is suspended when the side of the vessel moves upwards, the stabilizer assemblies being suspended from substantially opposite sides of the vessel in association with the saddles, wherein the saddles are arranged to transfer loads from the elongate flexible suspending means to the vessel, in combination with the other elements recited in amended Claim 58.

Claim 58 is therefore allowable over Gruber, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 58 based on the disclosure in Gruber is respectfully requested.

Claim 59 is also rejected as being anticipated by Gruber.

Amended Claim 59 is allowable over Gruber for reasons consistent with the above discussion of Claim 58. Withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 59 based on the disclosure in Gruber is therefore also respectfully requested.

Claim 1 is also rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,534,740, hereinafter Poldervaart, in view of Japanese Laid-Open Publication No. 55-14681, hereinafter the Japanese reference.

Poldervaart discloses a system for maintaining a buoyant body in position in relation to another buoyant body including a tanker 4 with weights 8 and 9 suspended by cables 7 which are attached to the tanker at points 5 and 6. The Official Action appears to take the position that each of Poldervaart cables 7 constitute suspending means of a stabilizer assembly, and that structure at points 5 and 6 constitute saddles. However, even accepting these interpretations for discussion purposes, amended Claim 1 is clearly distinguishable.

Specifically, the tops of the cables 7 are connected to the tanker 4, not to each other. Accordingly, Poldervaart does not disclose a vessel including a top of a suspending means of a first stabilizer assembly directly connected to a top of a suspending means of a second stabilizer assembly, in combination with the other elements recited in amended Claim 1. Moreover, the Japanese reference does not cure the above-noted deficiencies in Poldervaart.

Claim 1 is therefore allowable over Poldervaart in view of the Japanese reference, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 based on the disclosures in Poldervaart and the Japanese reference is respectfully requested.

Claim 28 is also rejected as being unpatentable over Poldervaart in view of the Japanese reference.

Amended Claim 28 is allowable over Poldervaart in view of the Japanese reference for reasons consistent with the above discussion of Claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 28 based on the disclosures in Poldervaart and the Japanese reference is therefore also respectfully requested.

Claim 55 is also rejected as being unpatentable over Poldervaart in view of the Japanese reference.

Amended Claim 55 is allowable over Poldervaart in view of the Japanese reference for reasons consistent with the above discussion of Claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 55 based on the disclosures in Poldervaart and the Japanese reference is therefore also respectfully requested.

Claim 59 is also rejected as being unpatentable over Poldervaart in view of the Japanese reference.

Poldervaart's points 5 and 6 do not increase the width of the tanker 4. Indeed, Gruber's fasteners 24 are suspended from points on the dwelling that are narrower than the width of the dwelling. Accordingly, Poldervaart does not disclose a vessel including one or more saddles for attaching to the vessel such that a width of the vessel is increased, the saddles arranged to support suspending means such that the saddles transfer loads from the suspending means to the vessel, in combination with the other elements recited in amended Claim 59.

Claim 59 is therefore also allowable over Poldervaart in view of the Japanese reference, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 59 based on the disclosures in Poldervaart and the Japanese reference is therefore also respectfully requested.

The dependent claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependence from allowable independent claims. The dependent claims also recite further distinguishing aspects of the vessel at issue here. For example, Claim 64 recites that the vessel includes a deck, the suspending means of the first stabilizing assembly being connected to the suspending means of the second stabilizer assembly proximate a center of the deck.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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